Wordeater Awards

For issues XI and XII
went to the following:

Linda Bohm -- $15.00
Steve Johnson --$5.00
Joan Koran --$7.50
Cathy Mc Cabe --$11.50
Bill Palich --$10.00
Pam Heavens --$10.00
Sharon Marizza --$10.00
Dave Griswold --$5.00
Craig Tuntland --$6.00
Etha Griffin --$5.00
Doug Richard --$5.00
Pat Bohler --$20.00
Lynn Vaughn --$10.00
Tom Pershey --$5.00
Bonnie Sayko --$5.00
Jeff Lane -- $15.00

The staff for XI and XII were Etha Griffin, Karola Limbach, Doug Richards, and Jacquil Bebar (honorary). For editions in 1975-1976, the staff will be Joan Koran, Sharon Marizzo, Cathy Mc Cabe. Manuscripts for Wordeater XIII should be submitted to a staff member or John Stobart in C1069 by Oct. 20. Wordeater Awards will be given for Worfeaters XIII and XIV. The Deadline for XIV will be Dec. 1.

Lollipop

Hello, lollipop!
Are you riding on your silver spoon?
Or could it be
that you're strolling through jungles
of chinaberry trees?

Surely you know
that your sparkled mask of glory
fades away, someday.
Don't you know that, lollipop?

Everyone has a collar, lollipop,
buy why did you
choose to wear a bow tie?
Yours is splattered with multi-colored polka dots.
Don't you know
that your lively, jumping dots
will gather round your throat
to choke?
Don't you know that, lollipop?

When your hands tangle in cat's cradle
do you look for escape?
Or when you become trapped
between the pages of your favorite book
Do you ever wonder why, lollipop?

Surely you know, lollipop,
that silver spoons tarnish,
chinaberry trees wither,
bow ties wear thin,
and
lollipops
melt.

Don't you?

Linda Bohm

I'll Say to You, Goodbye

Touch my hand and go
unto your world; alone,
Leave me, for I know
that life means nothing to you now.

Linger as you leave
oh, how I wish you'd stay
please let me believe
that love is strong, though you're away.

When I close my eyes
you'll pass in memory.
Find your freedom, in the skies —
anywhere you long to be.

Wishing you the love
I hope you someday find
I'll say to you, goodbye
and pray you'll reach true peace of mind.

Linda Bohm

Straiter Magellen

Furnish college widow, ramify flying squirrel,

Laniferous forgiving, covered use;

Pluralist kiln force-orthogenesis!

Implement cost, Romanized pig!

Longing galena, clew down.

Cabinet riffraff, oblate hortatory;

Doe good, dibble pillar modesty.

Irwin Baker Morgan

The Thought

I just realized I don't really know why Bobby
Kennedy was killed
Some dude named Sirhan shot him
But I don't know why
I don't think they ever said
Maybe I'll go by the library and look
it up
Not that it will change anything
I just want to know
Those events are seven years past
They aren't important anymore
Or are they?
Sometimes I read the papers
And I'm not sure.

John Puddicombe

Ask And Thou Shalt Receive

It was the five o'clock news,
Halfway over,
At the lottery
With the big winners --
"We prayed" came the words
"We prayed all week" from her, fortyish,
"We prayed all week that we would win"
suburbanite mouth.
"Lordy, Lordy give us a million dollars."
said my brother as he walked from the
room muttering obscenities.
"We prayed God all week to let us
win" she said "We prayed God..."
I turned it off....

John Puddicombe

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Breathe Deep

Singer, your eyes shine,
Your music fills my lungs,
Like a drag of air in early December
Cool enough to get me hot
What was your name again?
Lights stroke your long curly hair
Giving you an angelic image.
You couldn't be more miscast
If they issued you a pair of wings.
Most of us here are flying anyway
As you strum your folk gitar
In a quiet interlude
Before you electrify us again.
I came here with some people
But I don't feel like looking for them
Right now.
I'm just gonna sit back
And breathe your music
For awhile.

John Puddicombe

Money Deals for Four-Stroke Wheels

I have put the wrecking ball to
my ivory tower:

"Man, I'm making six-oh-five at Cat
now." he said.
I could be too.
Or I could be gettin' into business.
The rewards are great for hard-working
young men,
Lots of spendable American dollars.
But there's a catch:
Your time is their time;
Your spirit has to be contained;
And your wander-lust killed.
But me
I'll trade my money-deals for four-
stroke wheels
Before I settle down.

John Puddicombe

WONDERS THAT CAN BE

Come take my hand and lead me to the stars
Why walk through paths that lead to stagnant pools
When I must explore the universe.

The sound of laughter, no one else can hear,
Sunburst from atop a thousand hills.
No more will I delight in smoldering dreams,
Content to watch a meandering stream.
Place and things strange to behold
People with clothing colorful and bold.
Sandstorms, gusts of wind, Waterfalls and
Lots of snow
Sip of wine and taste of mysterious food
All the marvelous things that say
Hurray...You are alive!

Oh, come with me my love among the shooting stars
Only stopping briefly to rest among the clouds.
I do not want a love that walks with feet upon the earth
But will race with me so far above,
That the stars will be jewels in my hair.
Come along...share with me
All the wonders that can be

John 14:8

My heart saddens
In blue-green thoughts,
Deep in cave-cooled caverns
Of my wind-washed echoes.
They try to sensibly reason
In scientific evolutions,
My life, in terms of development,
Knowledge in terms of degree,
Emotion measured by happinesses . . .
. . . . . Yet at times . . . . .
My sadness brings me pale joy,
In tides of restful meditations
Of people, breaking along the shores
Of sea-shelled sands, washing clean
Former castles and footprints.
Foaming, bubbling, bursting currents
Renewingly rolling, rumbling, roaring --
Awakening gray-freshness
In its peaceful resurrected way . . .
. . . . . I am comforted . . . . .

Joyce Semplinski

Blue-Collar-Blues

Clickety-clack
Press the button...
Bang-bobble-bang
...Check the flow...
Dubba-doo-dong
...Push the lever...
Chick-chugga-chan
...Here we go...
Ranga-room-rub
...Who am I?...
Hamma-humm,humm
...What is the cost?...
Clickety-clack
...My mind is going...
Bang-bobble-bang
...My mind is lost...
Dubba-doo-dong
...This forty-hour relay...
Chick-chugga-chan
...Is quite insane...
Ranga-room-rub
...The machines are running...
Hamma-humm-hummmmmm
...They've won the game...

Bonnie Sayko

To Lara
(A reflection on Doctor Zhivago)
by Boris Pasternak

The cold wind sweeps oer the barren plain
As the wintery snows cover all signs of life.
A symbol of the futility of human plans.
And an additional burden to senseless strife.

How few the weeks, the days, the hours.
What is more precious on earth than our love.
Time the merciless spectre dour
Will soon claim us as a fallen dove.

Oh come love and hold me near while
The soldiers fall and the earth does tremble.
My solace and existence is with you here.
Can happiness be so pure and simple?

Do hopes and ambitions fall like shambles?
And are these brief moments life's true meaning?
The armies are marching and the cannon rambles.
As leaders command without ever seeing.

And the massive wave of human flesh blindly
Follows a dream that in reality ends in death.
What is real is you and I alone on this winter's night
And as the fire dims we know we are right.

TO MY DISTANT LOVE

Gone are the happy days we once knew,
When love was young and dreams were too.
And the grass seemed greener in the summer dew,
Where bluebirds sang sweeter before they flew.

Yes, life to us was a glorious game,
Each day would never be the same.
And nights cast a spell too wild to tame,
As we embraced and whispered each others name.

The streams would murmur as they passed us by,
A tribute to our muted lover's sigh.
How beautiful then the clouded sky
Where under we loved with no thought of goodbye.

But, alas, the summer did fade away,
As a rose that blooms can never stay.
When winter enters each perfect day
And casts summer's beauty to the earth to lay.

Tell me love, as the years do pass,
Is life so merciless that love can't last?
And can moments we shared together in the past
Be thrown into the wind as life was cast?

A smile so gentle, a word so kind,
Is all that is needed to soothe a troubled mind.
Just a touch from your love's sweet hand
Can still the turmoils that do command.

It is strange to me the goals we seek;
Not only the strong but also the meek.
We grope and crawl through each endless week
For some predestined mountain peak.

It is love that calms life's troubled sea
and makes a sham of false misery
A lasting monument that will ever be
Between my own true love and me.

Dan A. Ryberg

Waxen Gods with golden heads
A miracle with which to dread
I turned away
I would not see
Reality
Eternity

Faces that were false
That now are real
Soldiers that were tin
Are now cold Steel
Watching
Waiting
Times are changing

Armor clashes
Falls and crashes
Trapped inside the human cries
And slowly
Without mercy
Dies

Rejoice, Rejoice

Rejoice, Rejoice
The journey has begun
The lonely trail
In rusty mail
With helm and sword and shield

Greatness is resounding
The wind has blest the rain
In all the world is harmony
The chief derails the train

The rhyme has changed to metre
The sun begins to smile
The circles flow
The t'ai -- c'hi TV
The life is now worthwhile.

Rich LeClereg

LADY JUSTICE

O Great Lady of Justice . . . woman of virtue.
Virgin Maiden of Truth and Honesty,
possessing the wisdom and knowledge of the ages . . . I greet you.

I behold the sight of you, standing majestically as you do,
Calmly representing that which is your domain.
Ears straining for the sound of something contrary to your beliefs.
That which you hold sacred and dear . . . Truth.

Hands holding the scale of rights and wrongs.
The balances of the good and the bad, reward and penalty,
Exactly and precisely.
Determining what, if anything, would or should be the just due.
A blindfolded monument to impartiality . . . decider of fate.

Blindfolded so that you cannot see.
Dependent upon the treasures of historical precedents,
And owing allegiance to none.
All the things you hear, weighable against a grain of salt.

Why then, must you peek? Seeing them and seeing me.
Rewarding them . . . penalizing me.
Paying homage to man's inhumanity towards man.

Melvin A. Felton

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEELINGS

A gentle touch to the alarm clock, to stop the alarming sound.
A quiet removal of the covers, in order to get from bed.
A soft placement of feet around, on the carpet of red.
POSITIVE FEELINGS! POSITIVE FEELINGS!

A firm grip of the clock as it alarms loudly.
A harsh shake of the covers, as if to pull them closer.
A swift kicking of the feet proudly, not knowing I am a loser.
NEGATIVE FEELINGS! NEGATIVE FEELINGS!

Edna Lucinda Foster

Search for Pearls

In the darkest recess of my mind
A deep and nagging thought
abides.

Life is merely a series of mistakes.
Oh, not some small fault
that can be erased
With the end of my pencil,

But those massive blunders
which remain
Forever etched upon the face
of time.

I dream (quite often) that tomorrow
I will redeem myself
and rectify
All those improprieties
with which
I conducted life -- just yesterday.

My naive dream then shatters
For I repeat and reinforce
all those
Self-same errors that are
Such an integral part of me.

Sharon Marizza

SAND CYCLE

Heat.
From the sun, warming the cars, the
beach and the people.
People.
Warm from the sun, driving in cars
to the beaches, laughing.
Laughter.
Beachbaby giggles, a man and a woman,
holding hands.
Hands.
Reaching out, touching and loving,
a warm caress.
Caressing.
Acts of love, mature,
yet childlike.
Children.
Out on the beaches, running
in sand.
Sand.
White hot and gritty,
always in motion, reflecting the sun.
Sun.
Warming the people, the cars, and the sand,
spreading its heat.
Heat.

Conclusion

We walked through the woods that day,
hand in hand,
Yet as distant as yesterday from tomorrow.
We talked of so many things,
You and I,
but could not speak of the past,
or the future.
I guess it's over
but what went wrong?
Did we try too hard
or not try enough,
does it even matter, now.
The chasm is there.
Frustration aching emptiness
as lovers drift apart.

Craig Tuntland

BEYOND

Beyond the massive ruins,
the glassy, death-calm lakes,
the empty, childless plains,
a fresh wind blows an off-course seed . . .
and deposits it in radioactive ash.

Beyond the garish gaping craters,
the flattened mountain peaks,
the treeless forest preserves,
a fresh rain breaks thru lead-like clouds . . .
and becomes a merciless acid, quenching all thirsts.

Beyond the wildly thrashing, red-brown oceans,
the crippled Golden Gate,
the headless, armless, torchless Lady of Liberty,
a fresh sunbeam dances . . .
over curiously blackened, slightly smouldering mounds of humanity

Beyond the ends of a world,
the extinction of the known,
the birth of beasts to rule desolation --
a fresh rift appears in the scorched, dead earth . . .
and a perfect flower grows.

Lynn Vaughn

Springtime

Judy Warner had been an intelligent, young, and beautiful coed at San Francisco State University. That is until that beautiful spring day she left her dorm to go hiking in the lush terrain of the northern California mountains which begin their rugged ascent just a short drive across the Bay.

She was warned time and time again that the mountains were no place for a young girl alone, but the cautions that day were to go unheeded. After all, it was May, and warm sunshine had finally dispersed the cold winter rains, and the damp, chilling fog. She yearned for the light, the air, the freshness of the mountains. The school semester had been long and rountine. This was a chance for peace and quiet routine before the hectic schedule of final exams. Nature's sensual temptation had overcome any apprehension of danger the young coed may have ordinarily considered. She left for the mountains; now she is dead.

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Judy's death had not been an easy one. First came a brutal pummeling of her body that battered her into a state of semi-consciousness and left her body a pulpy mass of cuts, bruises, and broken bones. Then the death blow. In her dazed she had seen the glint on the edge of the razor sharp steel that slashed her throat from ear to ear. For an instant she tensed against the straps used to restrain her body. Then her muscles relaxed as the fast-spurting blood slowed, and darkness enveloped her being.

****

The story of her death was on the front page of the following day's newspaper, and the account of its brutal nature had shocked and saddened her fellow students and friends.

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After leaving Judy's body in the autopsy room at the hospital morgue, the Deputy County Coroner saw the distress in the eyes of the young nurse who had assisted him.

"What's the matter?", he asked gently, knowingly.

"That poor girl," came the quivering reply, "it's horrible to see anyone mutilated so!"

"Yes it is", he returned "but automobile accident victims usually are."

Craig Tuntland

THE HAMSTER

The baby hamster was born three weeks ago. Yet, already he had a stout, short body with thick, soft fur, light-brown in color. He was of a common species, Cricetus cricetus, as others like him are uncommonly called. And like his fellow creatures he was clean and attractive, required little care, and would eat almost anything.

But unlike other hamsters, this one was being treated special. He was kept in a nice warm shelter with plenty of fruits and vegetables to eat and a constant supply of water.

Wherever he was, he liked it. He had plenty of companions and a playhouse in which he and the others took part with various activities. His favorite was the transparent yellow and red barrel in which he ran and ran from time to time. Since running was a specialty of his, he would spend hours a day just stretching and clawing along his stationary rack. He would be big and strong someday.

Though this place was his home as long as he could remember, he somehow knew this was not his natural habitat. Instinct told him his forefathers didn't have it this good. At night he would dream of some strange, fantastic place; a place where the wind blew, where darkness fell, where other creatures unlike himself strived just to live from day to day. A place where he would be alone, and not be frightened. A place where he could run for minutes at a time and actually be somewhere else at the end of his dash. He would be good at that, he would tell himself. He would be good at that. . . .

He suddenly awoke, or was he still dreaming. He was not in his familiar surroundings anymore but was being carried off somewhere. Maybe, he thought, I'm being brought to that place of my dreams. He was always satisfied with his old home but would accept the change and the possible adventure that awaited him.

Suddenly he was dropped, but landed expertly on all fours.

Where am I, he thought. His surrounding was a little like that place from which he had just been taken, except it was bigger and much warmer. There were no fruits and vegetables to eat, no companions to play with, no colored barrel to run in. But, he thought, I'll get used to it. He had plenty of room to run, just so he stayed away from that strange, shiny, scaly creature curled up in the opposite corner.

So, with no worries at all in his new small world, the baby hamster licked his paws as his morning bath began.

In the outside world, it was just another day as the girl rushed by, not even noticing the busy little hamster or the sleeping snake. She just sat down, a few feet away, and began to listen to her next Biology Lab tape....

Bill Pavlich

SITTING TIGHT

The gray, two-doored Plymouth sedan turned left onto Midway Road. It moved slowly down the street as the driver carefully examined each house she passed.

"There's 324, Joan," said the passenger from the back seat. "Over there, on your right."

"I see it," said Joan Goldham, a 34 year old Brooklyn saleslady. "And there's 344, that red-bricked home."

The car came to a screeching halt about five feet farther than Joan had intended. "Remind me, Ellen," she said looking in the rearview mirror, "to get those awful brakes fixed." She chuckled. "You know...if I ever made too quick a turn, you'd be buried alive beneath all those packages.

"Oh come, come," Ellen said with a smile. "Here's your order for Mrs. Ellington. Now take it in there so we'll be back home before noon. We can't miss our soap opera, today, of all days."

Joan took the package from Ellen and started up the sidewalk. "I'll only be a minute. Sit tight."

The Ellington's front door opened before Joan had a chance to ring the doorbell. Mrs. Ellington greeted her at the door. "Do come in, my dear. Did you get everything I ordered?"

"I certainly did, Mrs. Ellington. How did you know I was here? Did you see me pull up?"

"No, no...Let's just say, well, I HEARD you were coming. Would you like a cup of tea? I could have Anna make a pot in minutes."

"No thank you. I must be going. My cousin, Ellen Smith, is waiting for me in the car."

"Oh...I didn't see anyone in the car with you."

"She's sitting in the back seat surrounded by all my packages."

"Well, do have her come in and join us."

"I'm afraid she can't. She became partially paralyzed in a car accident last year. Only 44 years old, too. I bring her along on my trips and she helps me with my deliveries."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear about that. Well...we'll definitely have to make it some other time, then. I'll show you to the door."

As Mrs. Ellington opened the door, Joan screamed. A short, dark-tanned man jumped into her car, started the engine and quickly pulled away.

"Oh, my God!" Joan cried. "I've got to call the police. Oh, Ellen...Mrs. Ellington, where's your phone?"

* * * * * * * * * *

Inside the stolen car, Ellen sat... motionless. The driver, a young man of about twenty-five, raced through the subrub.

Ellen soon became aware that the driver knew nothing of her presence. Debating on what to do, she finally decided to try to talk some sense into the criminal and see if he'd return the car.

"Young man," she spoke firmly. "Are you aware of what you are doing?"

Stunned, the driver slowly turned around and stared at Ellen. "What in the hell are you doing there?"

"I must say, young fellow," Ellen said, resenting the driver's tone of voice. "I should be asking you questions, don't you think? Now...if you'll just return this car to 344 Midway, where you found it, nothing will happen to you. I promise."

The driver thought for a moment, then replied, "Listen, lady...I'm stopping this rig at the first red light and you are getting out. Understand? Do you hear me?"

"I can't do what you say," Joan calmly explained. "I'm paralyzed."

"Huh," the driver grunted.

"But you," Ellen continued. "You have no choice. You are presently in serious trouble. Not only are you a car thief. But now you're a kidnapper. A kidnapper, young man. So therefore, I strongly urge you to return the car, and myself, of course."

"Look lady." His voice was strained. "I only want these packages. I don't even want the car. You'll be alright, just so you sit tight."

"I will not SIT TIGHT," Ellen shouted as she began to roll down the back window.

The car rapidly approached the traffic lights at the intersection of Lincoln and Prospect.

"I'm warning you, lady. Don't try anything stupid." He glared at Ellen through the adjusted mirror. "Lady... KNOCK IT OFF...LADY..."

The light before him turned yellow... then red. The thief slammed on the brakes just in time, but the car proceeded forward and came to a crunching halt, crashing broadside into the bus before it. The front windshield broke, shattering glass throughout the whole car.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

"So a policeman lifted all those packages from on top of me; very carefully, I might add, so that none of that glass would cut me." Ellen sat with Joan in one of the offices of the Wilson Avenue Police Station. "The young man was carried out on a stretcher. I didn't want to look. It reminded me of last year when..."

"Just so you're unharmed," Joan said, patting her on the arm. "That's all that matters, now."

Ellen glanced at the clock. It was 12:45. "Do you know what?" she asked with a painful frown. "We missed our soap opera!"

Bill Pavlich

Eritha

"Mother, Mother!" The frantic high pitched cry split the heavy atmosphere. The young boy dashed thru the arched doorway, searching for his mother.

"Haven Bestorm, what is it, what's wrong?" his mother asked as she hurried out to meet him. On Eritha it was so unusual for a child to be upset, that Melody Bestorm feared something terrible had happenned to her only son.

He threw himself into her arms. Her natural tranquility flowed over him and he felt his anxiety evaporate.

"Now, tell me what worries you, Haven," his mother asked gently. The boy pulled back to look at her.

"He's leaving," he said flatly.

"Who?" Melody asked patiently.

Haven stirred restlessly. He answered, "that man who tells the wonderful stories. He has the air and face of one of Eritha - the stamp of tranquility but his eyes! They seem shadowed by a deep sadness yet glowing with a deep love of life." He sounded bemused, awed.

"Yes, I know of him. Why is he leaving Eritha?" his mother asked.

Again Haven moved restlessly. He replied, "he said that his place was not among the people of tranquility, of Eritha because they had no need for him. He said we know our own minds and understand our existence. He said he had to go among those who question life and sorely disturb their souls. Mother, he said he had to go teach love! Love! I told him I learned of love before I was even born -- all he said was, so it should be, so it should be. He told me he goes to a place called Earth to be reborn into a life as a teacher. Then he told me to go home because the solar disc was becoming hotter and he didn't want me to get sick. Oh, I don't want him to leave, I do love him so!" The boy started crying again. Melody gathered him close and spoke soothingly, "Come, you will see him again. You must respect and love him more for what he is going to do for teaching love on a hostile world will not be easy, why don't you rest awhile."

She half carried him to his room and put him on his couch. She shut the reflector blinds -- shutting out the close, red brilliance of the solar disc.

"Wake me when father returns," he said drowsily. She murmured she would and left the room. She walked to the outside arch, feeling an unknown, alien nervous sensation. It's this brightness and heat, the closeness of the solar disc she thought. "I wish Tristan would come

home," she said aloud. She sighed and went to fix the meal.

Haven woke to the sound of murmuring voices. He crept to his door, listening intently but only hearing snatches of the conversation. It was his father talking.

"...too close to Eritha...become a supernova...Eritha will burn...Earth's orbit too close to ours...we will die, Earth will survive."

When the voices stopped, Haven knew his father was comforting his mother. He could feel waves of love eminating from the room. He slipped unnoticed from his room and out of the house. He had to find the man and tell him. The solar disc filled the whole sky. Haven ran to the place where the man always was. He was there, but he seemed to be preparing to leave.

"So you leave, then?" Haven asked. The man looked up, smiling sadly. "Yes, I must go. They need me. I will be reborn on a hostile planet, but always I shall know that the calm tranquility of Eritha shines above me." The man walked out into the blazing light. "You must go home now, to be with your family, surrounded by love -- the light of your live I shall always cherish." The man left.

Haven turned and ran home. His parents waited for him, their hearts opening to his sorrow, showering him with love and peace.

Eritha and its sun exploded in a blinding fury of heat. Shooting out of its orbit, the supernova raced across space to be caught in the Earth's atmosphere where it hung, gently burning, over a small, broken stable in a town called Bethlehem.

SMOKEY GRAY EYES

The man was alone, safe for the presence of the watcher. He paced back and forth, his head cradled in his hands. The man had something in him, something that had to be expressed, and it was so hard not to be able to tell. How to let others know of what he had found? How to tell the world that he had found what they were searching for? Questions pounded at his brain, demanding answers. He did not have a long time to use, for he had an appointment to keep. Finally, in a burst of light, he grasped his pen. Sitting down on the iron cot, he began to write.

* * * * * * * * * * *

The smokey gray eyes knew something I didn't. Hidden in the deep, dark recesses of her soul was something I, in my human mortal nothingness, could never catch the essence of. Many nights we spent, staring, fruitlessly arguing, each his own cause. I was right, and still I knew nothing. She alone knew what the answer was, and was unable to tell. Sometimes, playfully, she would flit and flitter, teasing me with her sleek oneness. The sight of the smooth, sensuous body would excite me, I would marvel that such a creation was on earth. Teasing her in return, minding and finding, running, laughing, we merged and parted, went back and were disillusioned.

She was a self-sufficient being, and yet she depended on me for her very existence. I was the fruit and life of her body, the protector of her mind. Such a delicate creature! So feminine! So rare! She was a harmonious blend of assertion and retraction, of man and woman, of gentle loving and cruel harshness.

How is this possible?, you ask. Oh, my friend, it is true. If you could but only know of her and be with her, your self would be completely changed. With just one meeting, one glance, you too would see what I mean -- you, too, would be drawn into that silky web of her attraction, would find yourself wholly committed to this wild creature -- a babe, so adult in her ways, yet so diversified as to be at opposite ends of the spectrum.

And why did I leave?, you ask. Leave this God-like, holy One? Oh -- those smokey gray eyes -- fire burning within, telling others of her self -- that which no one could ever really know. Yes, I left. My fragile ego was scrambled, I could not cope. She had used me, hurt me, loved me, thrown me away -- almost driven me mad! -- oh, in those smokey gray eyes --

* * * * * * * * * * *

FOUND 8/14/75, IN CELL OF ONE FRANCES MCHENRY, SECOND YEAR PATIENT AT ST. JOSEPH MENTAL HOSPITAL. PATIENT APPARENTLY JUMPED FROM SUNDECK LEDGE. HAD BEEN UNDER CAREFUL OBSERVATION. COMMITTED 6/22/73. MANUSCRIPT HAD BEEN ENTITLED: MY KITTY.

Cathy McCabe

The Visitor

The hot, humid air hung heavily over the town of Clayton that summer day. It was mid-July and the town was experiencing a record-breaking heat wave. Vera's small cafe on the edge of town was doing little business that afternoon. The customers were mostly truck drivers along with a few town regulars. On a Saturday night, the young crowd came out there for their kicks. The dust wouldn't settle for hours after they had gone. Today the dust would remain very high.

Vera May Langston had been a widow for seventeen years. She was the old maid of her high school graduating class, not being married until she was 26. "Fred Langston was one of the best," people could be heard saying the day of the funeral. He probably was.

Tom Langston, the only child of Vera May and Fred, had never been past the fifth grade. Vera had had a difficult childbirth and it was decided that, when he could get no further in school.

even with help, he must be brain-damaged. A free clinic's report had supported the theory. He could do odd jobs and understood most everything that he saw or heard. He was very dependable and, at times, very aggressive. Yes, all things considered, Vera had done a good job raising that boy.

That day the cafe was empty when a semi pulled in the gravel drive. A man of about forty got out of the cab and, stretching his huge frame, strode into the cafe. Hearing the bells above the door sound, Vera came from the kitchen to see who was there. Squinting her eyes to focus more clearly, she realized with a start of recognition who the man was. Wiping her hands on her apron, she shouted in surprise, "Why, Billy. Billy Joe Wilkins. What brings you here . . . after all these years?"

They shook hands vigorously and walked over to the counter.

"Vera May, I'm just passing through," Billy Joe answered, wiping his forehead with his shirt sleeve. "But I had to see some of my old friends. Now, how 'bout a beer?"

A little flustered, Vera went back into the kitchen and brought out an ice cold bottle and a glass. Setting them on the counter she said, "The beer's for special people. Don't usually serve it to just anybody. So tell me what all you been doing since you left. Let's see, must be seventeen years now." she said, crossing to the other side of the counter.

"Seventeen and a half," Billy Joe corrected, taking the first gulp of his beer. "Vera May, you ain't changed one bit since I seen you last." Looking around the dingy cafe, he asked, "Business is about the same? Don't recollect you or your daddy ever having much business here."

Vera's father had built the cafe when she was about two. Since that time, her life had been centered around the place and she had never had a chance to stray very far from it.

"No, we don't do much business here. 'Cept on Saturday nights when the young kids come out for ice cream." Looking off into space she repeated, "No, not much business at all."

Seeing that Vera was obviously disheartened about the cafe, Billy Joe changed the subject. "I've been on the road mostly. Been from shore to shore, seen the two oceans and, hey, I seen Coney Island! Remember you always said you wished you could go there some day?"

"Really, Billy Joe," she exclaimed. "Oh, what was it like?"

"Well," said Billy Joe, "it was mostly them pinball machines and arcades and some of them wild rides you always liked to go on. Remember Bass County Fair and the time you near got sick on that tiny roller coaster?" He threw back his head and laughed a deep, throaty laugh, and soon Vera joined in, caught up in remembering.

"And you kept stealing Molly Homer's canned jams," she said. "That one time she caught you and dumped a whole batch of grape jam over your head. Took you days to get it all out," Vera recalled with enthusiasm.

"Yeah, Verie," Billy Joe said, quieting down, "them were the days."

"They sure was," Vera said with a note of sadness in her voice.

"Hey, how's Tommy?" Billy Joe asked. "You wrote me in Baltimore and told me all about him when he was born. Then in Chicago you wrote about him being...sick ...er...I mean..." Vera interrupted him.

"He's got something wrong with his brain," she said in a flat voice. "Doctor at the clinic said he's smart, to a degree, but then he can't learn no more. But he is a worker. And strong. You never seen a boy as strong as him. No sir," she finished with emphasis.

"Then he don't look like his mother," Billy Joe chided. Vera May had always been a frail and washed-out woman. She was sickly as a child and never did weigh more than 110 pounds.

"Yeah, he's big and strong like his daddy," Vera replied quietly, stroking her stringy brown hair.

"Well, speak of the devil," Billy Joe said in surprise, "there he is now."

Standing behind the counter was a brown haired boy wearing a faded red T-shirt and faded jeans. He stood looking at the two people, trying to assess the situation. His hand would go through his rumpled hair every so often.

Seeing her son there, Vera said, "C'mon over Tom. I want you to meet a friend." Reluctant, the boy did not move toward them. Vera went over and gently took his arm and walked him to the stool. "Tom, this here is Billy Joe. Billy Joe, this here's Tom."

"Glad to know you, boy," Billy Joe said shaking hands.

"Glad to know you, Billy Joe," the boy replied simply.

"Done with Mrs. Neigh's fence?", Vera asked her son.

"Yeah," he answered, "come back to rest up. Hot out. Might go to the trailer and have a cigarette."

"Now, Tom...," Vera started but was interrupted by the phone in the back. Hesitating for a moment, she said, "I'll be right back," and went into the kitchen

"So you like to smoke, eh boy?" Billy asked.

"Yeah, It's kinda fun. I can make smoke rings even," Tom replied.

"What else you like to do?" Billy Joe asked. He had to know more about this boy.

"Oh, I like most anything. 'Cept smart games. I ain't good at smart games," he replied.

"Smartness ain't everything," Billy Joe answered, trying to reassure the boy

Vera came back from the kitchen. "Tom, Mr. Woodrow wants you to come over there and fix a part of his tool shed. Says he'll pay good but you got to bring your own hammer and nails."

"O.K. Ma," the boy said, rising to go. "I'll get right over there."

"Don't forget the hammer and nails,"

Vera reminded him. The boy sometimes had a bad memory.

Sitting down again next to Billy Joe, Vera explained, "He does jobs for people in town. Simple jobs. They pay him good seeing he's . . . sick. Darn!" she said pushing her hair behind her ears. "I wish he wouldn't smoke! Makes me nervous."

Billy Joe rose, apparently worried. "You know, Vera May," he started nervously, "My brother was like him. They say it shows up once in a while in a family. I wonder if . . ." He couldn't finish because Vera interrupted.

"Stop it, Billy Joe," she commanded. "Fred was alright. It was just the birth. It didn't work right. That's all."

"Come on, Vera. You know what happened that December seventeen and a half years ago," he said. "That freak snow storm. One in a million chance the weather report said. But we went to my sister's party anyway. Had some drinks . . . the car wouldn't start . . . " he said reflectively as Vera interrupted him.

"Darn it, Billy Joe," she shouted angrily, "We were kids then. We didn't know. No one knew and no one ever will." she said with determination in her voice.

Billy Joe would not let it drop. "But you know," he said, "that Fred wasn't able to . . . father a kid. That boy is my son. Here," he said producing a worn letter. "You wrote this to me in Columbia and told me yourself. Look," he said, pointing to a paragraph in the letter, "you weren't even wondering if Tom was mine or not."

"Oh, get that out of my way," Vera said on the brink of tears. "You think I need to be reminded of that. For seventeen years that's all I thought about. Fred was so happy when I told him I was going to have a baby. But he never did see his son. His son!" she repeated with a note of irony in her voice.

Putting an arm around her, Billy Joe said, "I tried, Vera May. I really did try to get back and help you raise him. But there was never any time. But if I could've, I . . ." he again didn't finish.

"No," Vera replied, "No you never did get any time. Well, let me tell you something. I taught that boy all about Fred . . . his daddy. I showed him pictures of Fred and told him all about him. He thinks of Fred, and rightly so, as his dead daddy. His only daddy."

"I know, I know," Billy Joe said remorsefully. "I couldn't get off work then and I can't now. Not with the job situation. And there ain't much opportunity here in Clayton."

"I know you couldn't then or maybe you just didn't want to and maybe you don't want to now," Vera added with scorn. "Anyway, if Tom ever found out it would break his heart. Besides, it's too late to make up for foolish mistakes." I won't talk about this anymore. I'm going out to get the mail and you can be on your way."

Billy Joe hung his head in regret after hearing what he had known all along. He had really wanted to be with her to raise their son, but . . .

All of this time the two had failed to notice that Tom was still in the kitchen. He had forgotten where the hammer was and wanted to ask Vera, but he had stopped short when he heard them talking. After hearing the truth, he was angry and terribly hurt. He started to go into the cafe but stopped and went out the back door remembering the job he had to do. He couldn't forget this job.

Vera came back from getting the mail, obviously in a better mood. "Oh, you're still here," she said to Billy Joe, all the anger out of her voice. "I'm glad. I want you to share the good news. Maybe I'm finally going to get a break. The paid-up mortgage came in the mail. I finally own this place! It's all mine." she exclaimed.

"Why, congratulations Vera May," he said, "I know you been waiting a long time for this day." He laughed, picked Vera up and whirled her around the room. Vera, feeling foolish, straightened her dress and went over to the counter.

"Sure hope I get some business tonight, to celebrate," she said.

"I imagine the place'll be hopping," Billy Joe replied, although he didn't believe what he had said.

"Well," said Vera, "I've got to get supper started. Are you staying?"

"Probably the night," Billy Joe said simply, "have to be in Dallas tomorrow night. Long drive."

"Make yourself at home," Vera said disappearing into the kitchen.

Supper was good that night. Tom's reaction to the mortgage had seemed happy. He didn't understand what it meant but knew it must be something good to make his mother so happy.

"Tom," Vera said as she took some more black-eyed peas, "why you so quiet tonight? Didn't the job go right? Are you feeling poorly?"

"It's O.K." Tom said simply, eyeing Billy Joe.

"He's just excited 'bout the celebration we're going to have later on, right son?" Billy Joe said, slapping Tom happily on the back.

"Uh-huh," was Tom's only answer.

Vera did get a good crowd that night. Mr. Jacob, the mailman, couldn't keep anything a secret. Besides tonight was Friday and the picture show was closed. Coming into the kitchen for more food, Vera saw her son at the table playing with a cigarette.

"Tom," I told you over and over I wish you wouldn't smoke them things. Makes me nervous," she said.

"Ain't smokin Ma, just playin, just playin," Tom answered.

About midnight all the customers had gone and Vera was ready for bed. Putting out the lights, she headed for the trailer, which she and Tom called home. Billy Joe was sleeping in the semi. Vera thought about the events of the day. There had been some heartache and some joy. Bone tired but happier than she had been in a long time, all Vera wanted to do was sleep and sleep and sleep . . .

The acrid smell of smoke and the screeching of sirens awakened Vera. Her clock said 2:37. "Now what in the heck," she started to say as she put on her slippers. Opening the door, she was met with a strong blast of smoke. She couldn't believe what she was seeing. The whole cafe was in flames. She saw firemen from adjoining towns trying to put out the inferno, but she knew it was too late.

A fireman came over with Billy Joe. "C'mon, ma'am," he said, "go back. This'll be out soon." She was trembling and the fireman helped escort her back to the trailer. Taking one last look, she asked in tears, "Wh...what happened?"

"We're not sure ma'am, but it looks like arson," the fireman replied quietly. "I'm afraid there isn't anything we can do."

"Where's Tom," Vera asked, suddenly remembering that she hadn't seen him since before entering the trailer.

"I don't know, ma'am," said the fireman, "but I'll get some men and we'll start searching right away."

"Wait," said Vera, frightened, "look."

The two men followed her gaze through a clearing in the smoke. Standing on the other side of the road was Tom.

The three people couldn't see, but as he watched the flames and the people hurrying around, Tom smiled and chewed on a bright, red apple.

Pam Heavens

NOWHERE WOMAN

It was madness. She knew she was going to the fragrant, warm, yellow-gold field more and more often. It was to the point of becoming an obsession, an addiction, this need for the field, radiant in its yellow-gold-stretching-for-miles flowers. For its peace.

How long ago was it when she first realized she possessed the vision and the power to make it hers? If you asked her what she was thinking of, she would only shrug and those huge, brown, lonely eyes of hers would blink you away as if she wondered who it was that had the audacity to ask something so personal. And like her thoughts, the place was private. It was hers and she never intended sharing it. Silence became an eloquent, stinging dismissal. In the end, it was simpler not to ask.

But she knew it was madness. This strange ability that tied somehow to the place she most wanted to be. Standing surrounded by yellow daffodils, no beginning, no end. Overwhelming, in their bitter yellow scent, warm green stems and haloed smash of sun light, filtering through overstuffed clouds. A funny, warm field, a lop-sided field, soft with yellow bubbles of flowers but filled with exciting angles, intriguing, inviting, a place to wander, stop, touch, wait. Wait forever.

Guiltily, she tried to rationalize the need inside of her. Deciding dreamily, her place was above all else, safe. Safe from everything.

She knew people wondered curiously about her. Meeting her for the first time, here, then she would disappear, be gone, leaving only a trace of the light golden scent she wore behind. May be she never was there. It's been prove spirits sometimes leave their bodies for a time bent on their own preoccupations. Perhaps they were frightened for her. It was madness of the softest, gentlest, degree.

She lived alone. By choice. It was simpler that way. Oh, there was a man who had offered marriage with paper, including credentials stating tall, good looking genes, Insurance background with a degree, two children and two cars. This however, implied commitment, a sharing, an intimacy. Soul to soul. Body to body, no pretence. Straight-laced conscience of old-fashioned intertwining of lives, thoughts, feelings. The knowing and caring of what makes the other live. Frankly she admitted it was impossible. No marriage, no living with a man. She'd never be able to submit her freedom, her spirit to subjection at the whim of any ordinary man.

So by choice, she was single. She preferred it, the impartial, non-involvement, explaining nothing. Long before woman's lib, she made her choice.

"Catharine," her irate husband screamed down the basement stairs, straining to see if she were there, unsure. She had a knack of disappearing at the damndest times. He hoped to hell she was. He had no clean socks in the drawer. "Catharine! Catharine!" angrily now, forgetting her warm submission of the night before in this newest unmet need.

She stood unanswering, unmoving, her bare feet and flimsy night gown scant protection against the damp morning chill of the cold floor. The heaped basket of socks loomed enemy-like, threatening, daring her to invade, to find a match. Maybe if she didn't answer he would leave, defeated, sock-less, sex-less, her mind caught the thought and she would win this round with silence Really, he was too much to take so early in the morning.

"Catharine," wheedingly now. "Forget the god-damn socks but for God's sake take my brown suit to the cleaners. We've got a dinner date Friday night at the Lancing's and I Need My Suit!" Strange how much he sounded like a five-year old. The door slammed at the top of the steps.

She slowly, deliberately came out from underneath the steps. Did he actually go to work without his precio socks? and began sorting wash, humming lightly, suit to cleaners, suit to cleaners, over and over, praying she'd remember. The wash split into little

mountains of dirty clothes, loathsome to the touch. The sheets and pillowcases, yellow and white, swirled before her eyes. Hum of the machines washing out last night's love. Yellow, yellow sheet, yellow and she was gone.

She lived in a solitary room perched precariously at the very top of some rickety stairs in an old, turn of the century house. The neighborhood quiet, peaceful, mostly old people filling their days with sun and small talk. Mutually, they lived and let live.

Impossible to say what she really owned, possessed. Not the large windows of the room, muslined dusty-yellow after too many sunlit days and rainy nights. Even the sagging, comfortable chair seasoned by heavy rumps wasn't really hers -- it had come with the room, part of the advertised furnishings along with the thin, narrow bed criss-crossed with a tattered bedspread. Ah, but it was, she knew, clean and neat. Even the wallpaper, victorian- relically done in yellow roses nostalgically climbing trellis of fern green. It was not hers.

Under her pillow she kept her only book. A worn paperback $1.50 version of Edna St. Vincent Millay. The closet held two outfits, one for going out and one for staying home.

She spent her time writing. Sometimes slowly, sometimes furiously, but always writing. She knew writing meant life. The alternative being death, she had to write.

Ten rooms, she sighed, count them. That's 2 1/2 rooms per person. $40,000 worth. Oh yes, musn't forget the basement and attic and the half-acre lot. How did we ever manage to accumulate so much stuff? She sipped the coffee slowly, munching the jelly doughnut without tasting. People in Hong Kong exist on narrow boats and smile a lot. What's wrong with us, with me?

She tried to concentrate on which rooms needed cleaning, which things needed cleaning. It was hard. Outside the warm, early spring air ruffled the hair of the children playing on the sidewalks. Perhaps would be a good day to begin clearing out the attic. She could hold a big garage sale. No. Perhaps tomorrow. Or never. The blasphemous thought shocked her.

The coffee grew cold. The day grew cold, spring retreated back into winter.

How many springs invested in this house. How many floors, walls, windows, scrubbed and rescrubbed?

Guiltily, she reached into her robe pocket. The little book of Millay's poems once had magic, no longer. There was no time for magic. She tossed the book into the garbage can and dumped the morning coffee grounds on top. So much for Edna, there was work to be done. A suit to the cleaners, what for supper, what for supper?

Outside daffodils with yellow heads giggled. Pale, thin gold weeping willows smiled and nodded to her and she was gone into the brilliance of the field filled with hot jonquils splashed with yellow raindrops. Gone.

But she left the isolation of the little room every so often. When confronted, when asked what she did or who she was, she would reply in all serious ness, a writer, of course. I write. The odd thing being it was never clear just exactly what she worte. The solemn statement, I write, settled the issue. It wasn't what she wrote that mattered, merely the accomplishment itself.

Hours, days drifted and mingled, smogging her time with a haze. The ordinary things, eating, sleeping, drinking, making love became quite extraordinary. They were things other people did. She, herself was too immersed into a life bounded by yellow legal paper and pens and the pragmatic typewriter. Once well-rounded, her figure became slender, almost spare, as if all the life she owned was pouring out onto the paper.

The work was coming. It was all she wanted. All she needed. All.

She was tired. Her thin hands clenched the steering wheel, willing it to go the way she wanted. Not enough sleep. Love-making with Johnny Carson watching was exhausting and a little degrading. She hated the voyeurism of it all. God, she hated it. Maybe she hated him too.

Backing the station wagon up and concentrating on the days shopping list lying beside her was automatic. Nothing was coming either way. Reverse. Check the corners, forward. She could see future societies drive past her eyes. Drive-in insemination, drive-in birth, life in the car and the finality of being buried in same.

In the rearview mirror she watched her two children talking, moving contentedly. Promise of Big Mac's, fries and shakes, and an afternoon movie was bliss enough to keep them from tearing the car apart.

Who were those little strangers in the back seat. Who?

Cleaners: pick up brown suit
Bakery: French bread (1)
Jewel: groceries

Gas, ballet lesson (cancelled), camera shop: film. The list went on and on, drums in her head, the wagon rolling to its beat. Children dropped off.

Alone now. From somewhere, early this morning the chiding voice of her mother, caustic in recrimination echoed, wondering plaintively just why Catharine hadn't called for over a week . . .

Driving faster, the Beatle's softly filling the car with the helplessness of their "nowhere man", Catharine smiled. She loved driving alone, driving fast. The car picked up speed, swerving crazily in its lane, hurrying home. Homeward bound.

The stop lights loomed ahead, overhead, placed on the whim of a bored stat inspector, insanely purposeless at this

nondescript intersection.

Lights changing, slowly voiding the red for the flash of magnificent yellow. Yellow, yellow of fields, unending fields. The aloneness, solitary room, the writing. The car never slowed. Its driver enraptured with the beckoning of her field. The power to create, the yellow of life never failed, never eluded her. Possession of the yellow waited. Without hesitation, she was gone. Past the yellow. Into the yellow. Forever and forever and forever.

Sometime later someone found the brown suit, still fresh, still clean, immaculate in its plastic bag protected from the wreckage and carnage of the twisted cars.

Farther down the road, next to the field, blood had spilled generously over the pale, gold dandelions, staining them dull brown.

Smoke and Shadow

The rain had slowed the fire to a smouldering mound of unthreatening damp grayness. The wet ash became a stain on the ground. The smoke, rising from the ruins of the church, moved among the rain and drifted above the head of the man watching.

He stood silent, even as the rain began to fall harder, with his hands in his pockets. But then he moved his foot and kicked at the liquid ash. It was the consistency of glue and stuck to the leather of his boot. "Even as I stand and actually see it, I find it hard to believe Holt -- Howard did this," the man said.

A girl, standing apart from him, nodded her head but said nothing. She gazed at the gray stain on his boot. The rain had turned the brown boots to black. "I guess I can't understand anybody burning down a church," he said.

She nodded again and walked toward him. "I heard he did it because he was smoking out a cat," she said, "a cougar."

"Sounds like Holt - Howard," he said.

Dusk crept behind them as they walked. His boots made far off echoes on the forest floor. She stepped over the dead leaves that were in their path.

"What are you looking for?" he said. The shadows stayed at their backs. "I'm not looking for anything. I'm just watching where I'm going," she answered him. "I'm trying not to make noise when I walk."

The dusk started to settle in the forest's damp crevices.

"Let's talk for a while," he said. "About what?," she said lightly. She gazed over her shoulder at him. "How about if we sit down and then talk," he said.

"What's wrong?" Her words were dull and dutifull.

"How about here?," he said.

They sat among the growing grasses and seedlings on an elevated spine of granite. The great difference in their ages accounted for much of the way each regarded the descending evening. He was silent and morose; she aware and receptive. They both breathed in the serenity.

"It's so quiet," she said.

"Yes."

She still had much to conquer, and he was concerned because of this. He had illusion, but she was defenseless.

"I dreamed early this morning," he said.

"You remembered?," she asked.

"I remember enough," he said. "It seems we were in that side room of the Bushfield house, the one that's narrow."

"With a book shelf at one end?" she interrupted.

"And windows. Well, we were there, you and I , and there were others. But the one other person I distinctly remember is . . . was a man with a moustache."

"Hanover has a moustache," she said.

"This man wasn't Hanover or Hosea Bushfield or anybody we know right off . . . but I knew who he was in the dream and he kept putting his hand on your back."

"My back," she said, surprised.

"It didn't seem to bother anybody. I can't remember being bothered by it at all."

"Did I mind?", she asked.

"You were being polite about the whole thing," he said.

"Sounds like me," she said.

It was getting darker all around them. The darkness seemed opague. "and then when we all stood to leave, you stood, straightened your shirt and looked hard at the book shelf."

"What was I looking for?" she asked.

"I don't know," he said, "but you heard the man say something to you about him and some woman he used to meet, and that it was all right. But when you turned to look at the man"

"The man with the moustache?"

"Yes. When you turned it was this man's son that was talking. A younger fellow."

"Did you know him any better than you knew the father?", she asked.

"No, but he was merely a youthful version of his father. No better," he said.

"No better? What do you know about them? I mean, what did you know in the dream?" She stopped for breath.

"His father was no good, nothing better than a horse thief," he said.

"Better than a magician?," she asked. He reached for her arm.

"Don't, please," he said.

"Sorry."

"The father had convinced everyone that he was a minister. His sons grew up fully believing him to be a minister," he explained. "But, you see, the son, the young man, when you looked at him when you turned and looked him in the face, was apologizing to you for what his father had done.

"You mean the son was apologizing for his father touching me on the back?"

"But you said that it was allright," he said.

"I said that?"

"I don't know if you were just being polite or . . . "

"Probably just being polite," she said.

The sun had completely set. They were in the night, with the wind miraculously hidden away, crouching and stretching and sleeping.

"I suppose I realize that I can't keep you from him if you are determined," he said.

She couldn't see his face too clearly because of the brim of his hat and because of the shadows.

"Who?" she asked.

"I'm not going to stop you from knowing Holt - Howard, but I wish you would listen to me first, now. Rhodesia, you confuse me."

"Well, you're confusing me now. Look," she continued, "if I knew Mr. Holt - Howard, why would I deny it to you and why, for heaven's sake, would I be meeting him in broad daylight in one of your dreams for public caresses?"

He sat silently.

"Do you want me to meet him? Just because he burnt down a church I happened to go to a few times doesn't mean I know him; he's probably off somewhere right now, in the deep of the wilds, chasing the cougar."

"That cat will lead him back here one day, then, I have the feeling that he's coming here again."

"Have some sympathy will you," she said, "you may be able to see into the future, but I'm blind when it comes to foresight."

They said nothing for a moment. The darkness put distances between them that had never existed before.

"Was there anymore to the dream?" she asked.

"Quite alot," he said, "but that section, the part I just told you, remains the most vivid in my mind."

"Oh," she said.

"So what do we do? Wait or go home?"

"Let's go home," she said, "but first, explain to me why you think Mr. Holt - Howard would be capable of burning down a church?"

"It just sounds like something he would do."

"Do you know him?", she asked, "it sounds like you do."

"I don't know him," he said.

They both listened, sitting rigid on their granite outcropping. Then they heard the dog bark in the distance. Then they heard the man's voice calling the dog to his side. Then there was silence.

Etha Griffin

Martha's Liberation

They sprawled, back sides up, in the grass. White sheets, on the clothesline above them, cracked in the soft spring breeze. They were busy putting Catalpha blossoms on the ends of their fingers. "My hand looks like a big claw." said Martha, tossing her long dark braids.

Blonde, curly headed Julie responded, "Mine look like a Witch's hands."

Quietly they admired their hands. Each crack of the sheets sent sprays of sun-warmed mist floating about them. This fresh moist air mingled with the tangy cleanness of the crushed grass and blended into the sweet decay of the earth beneath them.

Martha turned onto her back. She quietly watched cottony clouds scurry overhead. As the sun warmed her, she fought an impulse to close her eyes. She pointed skyward and said, "That cloud looks like a rabbit."

Julie squinted into the sun, "I think it looks like an ugly bug."

Both listened to the sounds around them. Off to their right, from behind a long row of Lilac bushes, they heard the chop-chop, and deep grumbling voice of Martha's Grandfather as he hoed his garden. From the kitchen window of the house across the lawn, came the bang of metal, and the clink of china as Martha's Grandmother washed the breakfast dishes. Then hearing a rustling from the tall weeds, in the yard behind them, both girls rolled to their stomachs. Eyes wide, they watched the wall of weeds just ten feet in front of them. "What was that?" Julie whispered.

"Just the wind." was Martha's soft reply.

With their eyes glued to the weeds, the girls heard a door slam, footsteps on wood, then the creaking spring of a screen door. A shrill voice called, "Here Tommy, Tommy, Tommy." From the weeds leaped a huge black cat. It bounded over the undergrowth toward the voice calling from the little house next door.

"A cat," Julie sighed with obvious relief, "I thought it was a snake."

Then the same shrill voice called, "Morning Martha, Morning Julie."

"Don't answer her." Julie said as she ducked her head so it couldn't be seen from the little house.

"Good Morning, Mrs. Conant." Martha called across the yard. They heard the screen door close, the footsteps, then the bang of the door to the house.

"Julie, that was rude. Why didn't you say hello?"

"She's a Witch, that's why."

"That's a dumb thing to say."

Julie rose to a kneeling position

and angrily answered, "She is a Witch. She uses candles all of the time. She always carrys that broom. The cat sits at the table with her when she eats. She talks to the cat all the time. The cat even has a little bib, and his own knife and fork. That's how I know that she's a Witch."

Jumping to her feet, Martha yelled, "She uses candles because she doesn't have electricity. She uses the broom, like a cane, to help her walk. She talks to the cat because she is lonely. As for the rest, well, you just made it up. I'm going to go hang upside down on "the bar." Do you want to come?"

"Mama says girls shouldn't act like boys. They shouldn't hang upside down showing their underwear."

"Who cares about your underwear? You're always worried about your stupid underwear." Martha tromped across the blossom-strewn yard. She went up the sidewalk, crossed the alley, passed the church, and she crossed the street at the corner and dissappeared behind a tall hedge.

Julie watched her go. She kicked at the white blossoms, then slowly walked across the street to her own house. She followed the sidewalk running along the side of the house, and went into an old shed near the back fence. In a moment she reappeared dragging two old blankets and a hammer. Under her Mother's clothesline she spread one of the blankets. The other was thrown over the line and anchored to the ground, with clothespins hammered into the corners and along the sides. When she finished, she stood back to admire her tent. She went into her house and returned with her doll buggy. She pushed it right into the tent.

In the meantime, Martha had arrived at the "bar." This was a thin steel-pipe guard rail, erected to protect the pedestrian from a drop off into a deep ditch. A concrete culvert protruded, from under the sidewalk, several feet out into the bottom of the ditch. Martha threw first one leg, then the other, over the rail, and swung upside down by the back of her knees. Her braids trailed in the dust below. She released her hands from the rail, swung free, and tied the braids into a big knot on top of her head. "Who cares about underwear?" she mumbled to no-one in particular. On returning her hands to the rail, she pulled herself up to a sitting position on top of it. She balanced for a moment, then she threw her body backward, catching herself with her knees. Three times she did this successfully. On the fourth try, however, her knees failed to hold. The momentum of her body swung her out over the ditch. As she fell, the back of her head struck the culvert, hurling her flat on her back into the ditch. She saw flashes of red and white lightning , darkness, then the lightning once again. She lay there unable to move. Her thoughts were of breath. She had none. "Like when I tried to fly off of the chicken house roof." she remembered. "It will come. Lay still, it will come," she thought over and over. It did come. Her lungs greedily gulped in the air, again and again. Then the lightning returned. An explosion of pain; then darkness.

That afternoon Julie walked to the tent from her house. She crawled inside, and sat staring out of the opening at the opposite end. From there she could see the clothesline, next to the house, where they had played that morning. Seeing a movement in the shadows near the house, she strained to see. "Martha?" she called automatically. No, it's that cat again, she told her doll as she grabbed it from the buggy and hugged it close.

"Mama said, Martha's in Heaven." For a long time Julie was lost in thought. She stared at the walls of the tent. Then, she spoke to the doll, "Martha can't be in Heaven. She did things girls aren't supposed to do. Would you like to have some cookies with me?"

Pat Bohler

capabilities. (Audience coos) As I was playing with a Cubinator Hexagonal, a toy very popular with babies at that time, I was startled by a minor electro-power failure. As you know, they were quite common and, therefore, I was not frightened, just startled. I dropped my Hexy and instinctively went to get it. In order to retrieve my toy, I had to move my own body without mechanical aid. Actually, I crawled on all fours over to the Hexy, picked it up with the power in my own hands, and promptly shoved it into my mouth - all under my own physical power!"

Lynn Vaughn

All The President's Men

howard hunt the burglar

told chuck colson the plumber

that donald segretti the dirty tricks man

had heard from maurice stans the man over at creep

that he had heard from john mitchell now the outcast man

that john wesley dean who had recently became the presidents man

overheard john erlichman the left hand man

tell bob haldeman who we all know was the right hand man

that he had personally heard the president who was his own man say

i done fucked up

Melvyn A. Felton

NIGHT GALLERY SEGMENT

INTRODUCTION

(Open on Rod Sterling with a medium shot standing on conventional "Night Gallery" set with black background and various paintings set around. After verbal story introduction, cut to painting of face with horrified expression superimposed over an amoeba like black form which in turn is boardered by a tree filled landscape.)

Rod Sterling: The culture of the American Indian with its colorful history and haunting legends has always been a rich source of inspiration for our "Night Gallery" artists. One of these legends is the subject of our next exhibit which we call Catoca.

(Open with long shot of the hospital, preferably wood-framed structure. Clear but windy night. Sound of wind only. Cut to inside corridor. Long shot of nurses station. Slow zoom to medium shot. Speech of women faint but not clearly audible. Volume level and clarity are increased as camera moves in.)

Aide Angie: Jan, was he really acting so crazy when they brought him in?

Nurse Lambert: Yes, Angie, he's having hallucinations from the shock and exposure. He was that way when the highway patrolmen found him near Preston. Dr. Lindeman is in with him now.

(Cut to patient's room. Medium shot of both Dr. and patient. Dr. standing next to the bed, in which patient is in restraints.)

Brennen: Doctor please, in the name of God, get me away from here!

Dr.: Mr. Brennen, you've got to calm down. Let me help you to . . .

Brennen: Doctor, it got Andy, it'll get me!

Dr.: Who is Andy? What will get you? Tell me exactly what happened so I can help you.

Brennen: There's no time! I've got to go!

Dr.: You're not going anywhere with those restraints on. The sooner you tell me what's going on, the sooner I can get you out of here.

Brennen: Ok, ok, if that's the only way to get out, here goes, but it's gonna be short and sweet. I know I haven't got much time. Andy and I came up from Oakland to do some fishing on the Siskiyou near Preston Peak . . .

(Dissolve to long shot of a jeep coming along a dusty mountain road . . . Pan to follow jeep and as it passes camera cut to medium shot of Steve and Andy in the jeep . . .)

Steve: Say Andy, you sure we got enough beer? A week is sure a long time if we run out.

Andy: You alky! We've got enough beer to last two normal people a month, but I guess it wouldn't hurt to pick up another six-pack or two.

Steve: Where at? I haven't seen any civilization for the last twenty miles.

Andy: There's a little place just before we head up the logging road. Strange old coot runs it. Full of tall tales, so don't get too involved with him or we'll never get camp set up before dark.

Steve: What kind of stories?

Andy: You name it. Last time it was how he killed a mountain lion with his gold pan back when he was a prospector.

Steve: Yeah, that's kind of tall.

Andy: Well you'll see for yourself, there's the place now.

(Cut to long shot of the jeep approaching a rundown log cabin with faded, peeling advertising posters and well rusted junk strewn about the front of the store. . . As jeep pulls up, old Hank hobbles out to greet them. As Hank speaks, Steve and Andy get out of the jeep. Cut to medium shot of all three. Track the three as they enter the cabin.)

Hank: Howdy young fellers! It shore be good to see somebody besides them mangy Indians that come by now and then. C'mon in, even they's gone now that season's come along now!

Andy: Say old timer, it's good to see ya again. Got any cigarettes less than a year old?

Hank: Yup. Loggers brought me up some just last month. Just chew myself, and the Indians don't smoke 'em, so they's all yours.

Steve: Hey old man, what's this season you mentioned a minute ago?

Andy: Oh, no. Story time. I'll find the beer while this is going on.

(Andy walks off camera toward the back of the store. Old man loses his smile, looks agitated. . .)

Hank: Ain't nothin pleasant to talk about young feller. If you're smart, you'uns will just git what ya come fer and git down the road to town afore evenin comes and you find out.

Steve: No way. We're up here for a weeks fishing, and the salmon aren't running down Main Street.

Hank: If'n you know what's good fer ya you'll git! Ain't no legend like them smart university fellers was up here told me. I know! It comes at dusk, lookin jist like a round, black hole in the air. Ain't no livin man nor beast gits away from it once it starts comin fer em! Injuns call it Catoca.

(Andy re-enters carrying the beer.)

Andy: Well why hasn't it gotten you yet?

Hank: Don't want me. I'd a been gone long ago if it did. Takes animals and outsiders mostly, but you saw the Indian's are gone. Their shanties along the road's deserted. They don't take no chances. They knows! Too many of em's been took not to!

Andy: Well Catoca or no Indians or whatever, we're going fishing.

(Andy takes Steve's arm and begins leading him from the store. Camera behind the old man as they leave. Cut to medium shot of them getting into the jeep.)

Steve: So what do you think about that?

Andy: Just an old man's talk. Let's get going before the salmon are all down in Monterey.

(Camera pans to follow jeep until it disappears down the road.)

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COMMERCIAL SLOT

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(Open with medium long shot of Steve and Andy laughing and talking as they drive down narrow logging road. Happy, light, "traveling" music. Jeep pulls off the road and stops. Steve and Andy get out, get into back packs and pick up equipment and begin hiking up the mountain. They disappear into the brush. Fade in as they arrive at a small clearing. Medium shot as they put down their equipment and begin setting up camp.)

Steve: Are you sure we have everything we need? This doesn't look like much equipment for a week long stay. . .

Andy: Just trust the old woodsman here. . .We may not have all the comforts of home, but you can't find fishing like this in your back yard.

(Steve takes coin from his pocket and flips it in the air. . .)

Steve: Well let's flip to see who cooks tonight.

Andy: Heads!

Steve: Tails, you lose! Just keep it simple tonight, no more than eight courses.

(Steve pockets the coin.)

Andy: You'll get half a can of beans and like it.

Steve: Yeah, ok. I'm going to take a look around. Holler when supper's ready.

Andy: Get lost!

(Long, tracking shot of Steve walking through the brush. Camera loses Steve as he enters a thick grove of trees then cuts to pick him up from directly in front of him on a long shot as he emerges. After he nears the camera, cut to directly behind him revealing his approach to a deep ravine. Medium shot of Steve as he sits on a rock and surveys the ravine. Close up of his face as he spots something in the ravine and leans forward to get a better look. Cut to long shot of a small deer walking along the bottom of the ravine. Cut back to medium shot of Steve.)

Steve: Well, what have we got here? My own little nature study.

(Cut back to long shot of the deer as it disappears into the shadow of a large boulder. Cut back to closeup of Steve. He sits back up on the rock and fumbles in his shirt pocket for a cigarette and a match. He lights the cigarette and leans back down to look in the ravine.)

Steve: What the hell! Where did that shadow go? Where did that deer go? This is weird! Almost like the think that Hank was talking about. I'm getting out of here!

(Back to medium shot as Steve gets up and runs back into the trees. Pick up Steve emerging from the trees and track him as he runs back for the camp on a long shot. Long shot of Steve approaching the camp, then a close up of him as he speaks.)

Steve: Andy! Andy! I saw something!

(Medium shot as Steve enters the edge of the camp and stops.)

Steve: Andy! Andy! Where are you at?

(Short, quick close ups of the beans boiling over the pot into the fire, and a burning cigarette laying on the ground near the fire. Sizzling sound as the beans hit the hot coals. Medium shot of Steve pivoting as he searches the surrounding brush for some sign of Andy.)

Steve: Andy! Andy!

(Close up of Steve's face contorting with horror.)

Steve: My God!

(Medium shot of black spot of about five feet by four feet next to and by size reference to the tent. Medium long shot of Steve. Dolly the camera towards him to allude the approach of the spot.)

Steve: No! No!

(Medium shot of Steve as he turns and runs off into the brush. Dissolve back to hospital room. Medium shot of Steve and the doctor.)

Steve: Now do you see Doc? I've got to get out of here! It's coming for me, it won't give up!

(Fade out and fade in to a medium shot of the doctor in the cafeteria, staring blankly at his cup of coffee. Cut to close up from a downward tilt into the coffee cup with the doctors face superimposed as a reflection in the coffee.)

Voice over of the Doctor: What a strange delusion, and he really believes it the way he became so hysterical when I wouldn't let him up after he finished telling me. Well the sedative I gave him should keep him out for hours.

(Cut to medium shot of doctor who sits up with a start at the sound of the P.A. system.)

Hospital P.A. system: Doctor Lindeman, please come to room 105 immediately!

(Track the doctor on a medium shot through the cafeteria and into an elevator. Cut to medium shot of elevator doors opening and pan the doctor down the hall where he enters a room. Cut to doctor entering room with nurse standing there.)

Doctor: Where's Brennen?

Nurse: Doctor, I don't know! I've been standing outside the door talking to Angie ever since you left.

Doctor: Then he must have gone through the window.

(Pan the doctor crossing the room to the closed window.)

Doctor: Strange, in his state I wouldn't think he would take time to close the window. Wait a minute, the latch is fastened too!

Nurse: I know Doctor, I saw that myself. Besides that, how could anyone after being so heavily sedated get out of those restraints?

Doctor: I don't know how, but he did, so hurry and call the police. He may be dangerous.

(Medium shot as the nurse leaves. Slowly pan back to a close up of the doctor as he turns and stares out of the window.)

Doctor: Yes, how could he possibly get out. It could almost seem that the story he told me is true. . . no, that's ridiculous.

(Slowly pan from the doctor out the window to the lights of the town and then to the silouettes of the mountains in the distance.)

Craig Tuntland

OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE

A Play of Many Acts

Jerry: Betty, where the hell is my breakfast? It's bad enough that I can't have my morning swim because the F.B.I. is checking the pool for traces of Patty Hearst, but when my breakfast isn't ready on time. . .

Betty: Now Jerry! Calm down -- you wouldn't want the press to hear you! Especially after you went and told them that you fix your own breakfast every day. And what if one of Dick's tape recorders is still hidden around here?

Jerry: Uh yea, I suppose you're right. Anyway, I might not have time for breakfast. Henry called and said he was dropping by, so I've got to get dressed! Have you seen my WIN button?

Betty: I swear, you'd lose your head if it was fastened on!

later that day. . .
(knock on door)

Henry: Excuse mich, my President. I'm sorry to bother you while you're reading Boy's Life, but ve have an important conference with the Arab representative.

Jerry: Oh my God! I completely forgot! I'm supposed to meet with the representatives from Mexico now. It's time for another strong, forceful decision from the oval office! You've got the prize Henry -- what should I do?

Henry: Vy don't you meet with both of them at the same time? They're both the same color.

Jerry: Remarkable Henry! How do you manage to do it?

Henry: (blushing) Oh, I don't know.

(the door bursts open)

Nelson: GOOD MORNING GERALD! HOW ARE YOU THIS FINE AMERICAN MORNING? WELL, I TRUST? AND MRS. FORD?

Jerry: Fine Rocky, just fine. And how are you and Mrs. Rockefeller? I understand she hasn't been very happy since you've been working on your Congressional Report.

Nelson: YOU KNOW, I FOUND THE MOST INTERESTING FILE ON HER AUNT...

Jerry: We haven't time for that now -- we must move forward to a meeting with the Mexicans and the Arabs.

the meeting . . .
(as Henry and Jerry arrive, the Arab representatives are playing cards. The Mexican representatives are sitting with angry looks on their faces)

Arab 1: . . .I'll raise you five oil wells and throw in five Phantom jets.

Arab 2: Done! I'll raise by two U.S. factories. . .

Jerry: Gentlemen!

Mexican 1: Senor Ford, we are here to complain about the way America has taken over our Sombrero Industry. Over 90% of the industry is under U.S. control and your country is supporting this exploitation by lowering tariffs for sombreros from American factories and keeping the tariffs high for Mexican sombreros.

Mexican 2: Si! The Sombrero Industry is a huge part of our economy. With the unequal tariffs, our economy is being crushed.

Jerry: Look, America is sick and tired of you small countries trying to take advantage of our benevolence. All I can say about your economy is TOUGH LUCK! You wouldn't be in this mess if you wetbacks had spent more time running your industry and less time taking siestas, growing marijuana, and swimming the Rio Grande.

Henry: Ja, he ist right! What is happening in Mexico is part of American tradition. Hawaii, Samoa, Panama, Taiwan, Japan -- they are all examples.

(the Mexican representatives storm out of the room)

Arab 1: Mr. Ford. . .

Jerry: Huh?

Arab 1: Mr. Ford, after receiving favorable reports from previous representatives, our rulers have decided to buy Walt Disney World. They feel the technical knowledge they will obtain there will greatly increase the welfare of their countries. We are here to discuss a price.

Jerry: But, but. . .you can't buy Disney World! It's part of America's heritage. Washington, Lincoln, Mom, apple pie, and Walt Disney World! We won't sell it -- never, never, NEVER!!!!!!

Arab 2: But you seem to be, pardon the rather crude pun, over a barrel. You realize that if you don't come across with the deal, the price of oil will skyrocket. And you know what the public will do in '76 if that happens. They might even reinstate Nixon.

Jerry: Oh, Christ.

Arab 1: Who?

Henry: Ve will not tolerate it! Ve will invade! Ve will use force. . .

Jerry: Uh Henry, can I talk to you for a minute?

Henry: Ja!

Jerry: Henry, we can't invade. Last week we sold the Marines to Syria and the Air Force to Israel.

Henry: Vas about the Army and the Navy?

Jerry: They're in training for their annual football game.

Henry: Uh, oh. . .

Arab 2: Now, about the terms. . .

Jerry: It seems so unfair. Henry Ford, look what you've done to us! You don't deserve your noble name. . .oh, where did I fail? I've been trustworthy, loyal, kind -- friendly, curteous, and now, we're losing Walt Disney World to the Arabs. How can they be so cruel, heartless, and unfair? America would never do something like this!

Dave Griswold

Field Stevenson - Why is everyone obsessed with doing things in the correct order?

(Silence)

Allright, start with the beginning and all that, but if I could, I would appreciate having the last word. The final word, I mean.
(She says all of this humbly).

"INVITATION TO DESPISE"

A one-act play

Field - I know more about the characters than the author does, really I do. (Pause). I am standing here (she is) and I blend in with the backdrop. Pause.

Sundown - You said pause.

Field - Right.

Sundown - You can't say a pause; you have to do one.

Field - (looking disgusted with herself). I hope nobody's listening. I've already messed up.

Sundown - Really, that's allright. (He is sympathetic). (He turns to face the audience). If there's anyone out there, listen up. (Pause). Because this is about the only thing I'm going to say that makes any sense and has anything to do with . . . uh . . . (He looks at her; he hopes she knows the name of the play).

Field - An invitation to despise.

Sundown - Yeah, right. Like I said

Field - (Interrupting him) Sunlight, SUNLIGHT!!!!!!!!!! (She hits the floor of the stage as if she were ducking a thrown tea cup.) "Why can't we have something real in this play?" (She asks from her crouching position on the stage.)

Sundown - I hate to mention this but you keep reading the stage directions outloud.

Field - The playwright is confused. He/she/it does not know how to use parenthesis, it's not my fault. (Pause). Although, I wish it was.

Sundown - Was your fault?

Field - Yeah. I have the same feeling a person might have on a train speeding down the tracks without a conductor, or an engineer.

Sundown - Maybe the tracks aren't laid all the way.

Field - All the way to where?

Sundown - Good question. (Pause). Why don't I go get the rest of the group and we'll start. (He walks offstage.)

Field - (Still standing there matching the blue backdrop). I prefer it when we start in the middle. (She looks around nervously). I've never felt so alone in all my life. (Pause). I like it. (She walks to one of the trees on the stage - not one of those symbolic ladders, a tree, a tree - and sits beneath it on a log). This is good. (She is looking up into the tree). At least it's a tree and not one of those damn symbolic ladders. A tree, a real tree. (Pause). Well, maybe we'll be allright when everybody gets here and we get into the plot. (Pause). I hope there's a plot.

(Suddenly the sky opens up and drops a thousand blue balloons on the stage and)

Bokonon - (He enters dressed in a robe). The sky is falling, the sky is falling, (and a dog follows him on the stage.)

Field - And a dog follows him on the stage.

Sundown - (Comes walking on behind Bokonon and the dog, in ranch-hand clothes and boots and guns). You're speaking the stage directions. (He sits down near the)

Field - Merry-go-round. Anyone care for a ride?

Sundown - The damn thing's busted.

Bokonon - I realize that it is difficult to be liberated from your creator. I too have been given freedom. I

Field - (Interrupting him). who said anything about being (Pause) freed?

Bokonon - I, too, was a long time in realizing that I had been released from the grasp of my maker.

Sundown - No wonder this place is such a mess.

Field - It's a stage.

Sundown - No wonder this stage is such a mess, we've been deserted.

Bokonon - Freed.

Sundown - Do you know anything about this? (He turns and looks at)

Field - Well, I had an idea.

Sundown - How much of an idea?

Field - Well, actually, I've been (pause) well, I've been writing the stage directions for quite awhile.

Sundown - You've been pretending that we had a playwright when you knew all along we didn't. (he is angry and climbs onto the back of one of the merry-go-round horses).

Field - Well, we did at first but . . .

Bokonon - There is nothing degrading about being without an author. I've been writing my own stuff for years.

Sundown - (Turning again to Field) Why didn't you tell me you were writing the stage directions? You've been trying to cover for He/she/it haven't you?

Field - Shrugs her shoulders and sits back down on her log.

Bokonon - I would be pleased to make a scene for you.

Field - Make a scene?

Sundown - I think he means write a scene. (Pause). What about the dog?

Bokonon - The dog writes his own material.

Field - Write out the dog, Sir, (she addresses Bokonon), it sounds (she stops).

Sundown - Like what?

Field - (Shouting). I'm shouting. Can everyone hear me? (Everyone except for the dog, or possibly the dog too, is looking at her curiously. They are surprised

I don't have anything important to say, so why can't I end my sentences in the middle?

Sundown - Fine with me. (Pause). You're sure as hell taking this hard.

Bokonon - (Walking over to sit down on another of the merry-go-round horses). No, I believe it is creative frustration venting inself.

Sundown - Lust, huh?

Field - I am standing up. (She stands up from the log and walks out from underneath the tree). And walking out from underneath the tree. Forget the dog, although I love dogs. (Pause). Really, I do. (Bokonon and Sundown look at each other and nod exactly once.) (She ignores them). But let me tell you this: I opened the dark door and let more darkness and (pause) him (pause) inside. He was afraid of me and I couldn't look him in the eyes. He kept holding his car keys in his hands. Tightly. (She bends over and picks up one of the blue balloons and) I am going to strangle it.

(Bokonon and Sundown climb down off the merry-go-round horses and sneak off the stage). (She picks up another balloon and) strangles this one too. (She walks towards the very front of the stage facing) all of whoever is listening, could I tell you something? (Pause). I mean something that I have never told anyone before? (Pause). It all happened in a flash; a quick, bright, long, low moan of a black flash. (Pause). Of course, (she is full of regret) when he found out about him, he refused to write anymore. I tried to apologize, but then I got mad because he was making me swallow his double-standard sideways. And then there was Sundown to think of. I said to him, "The show must go on." I said it as a joke but he was all angry and full of the fear of being discovered. (Pause). And he said "You were doing that while I was risking everything for you?" And I said I was sorry. But he kept taking his time before it happened, and I was only human, and "no you're not" he shouted at me. I looked him in the eyes and said, "Ha, I'll be alive and thriving when the grave's eating your guts." (Pause). But (She is suddenly quiet) I can't stand to be cruel. (Pause). And then the merry-go-round rusted and that's the last time the sky'll fall like a thousand blue balloons. (Pause).
Do you care?

(A wind picks up from offstage and blows the balloons and her dress and her hair and rustles the leaves of the trees). (Bokonon and Sundown walk on stage again, pulling the trojan horse.)

Sundown - Hey, it's allright now, we've got it all worked out.

Bokonon - The Ides of March.

Sundown - Like it?

Field - You can't control that draft, huh?

(The wind from offstage stops).

Sundown - See, (he says after the wind stops) things are going to be better now.

Field - Sir, (she addressed Bokonon) When you were freed did you ever (pause) well, wish it hadn't happened?

Bokonon - Let me tell you, in order of importance: number one, arms that ensnarl, number two, the mad pursuit of unicorns, number three, total disdain for marriage, number four,

Field - (interrupting) vengeance of the mislead, I would imagine.

Sundown - Really, I do have something important to say. (He pauses, waiting for either one of them to say anything).

Bokonon - Preconceived humiliation.

Field - Oh. (Pause). We're listening, Sundown.

Sundown - Well, it has to do with the ultimate truth. See, I decided that there is no such thing as the ultimate truth, but that there is an individual truth. (Pause). Actually I think that there are a million individual truths. (Pause). Do you like it?

Field - Sorry, nobody bothered to write an answer to that. In fact, (Pause) that's what I can't understand, why would somebody bother to write in the trojan horse but not bother with answering a serious question?

Bokonon - But there is nobody writing or not writing, it is you.

(There is a long, uncomfortable pause).

Field - Well, I guess we can't live in both worlds, Sundown. Which do you vote for:

A rusted merry-go-round
the trojan horse
blue balloons
artificial spot lights
total irresponsibility
constant freedom of speech
grapes of wrath and glass menageries
immortality
masculinity
femininity
creativity
spontaneity
gayity
and speaking of triviality, there's
religion
self-denial
fortification
determination and elation
not to mention self-reproach and misgivings
or

Sundown - Or

Field - Or

guilt
lust
laughter
fear
fear
fright
fear
women
men or pause

Sundown - Sounds all the same.

Field - I really only know what I've read.

Sundown - Red?

Field - I've read alot. That's what I do in my spare time.

Bokonon - All your time is spare. (Pause). Am I not right?

Field - You could be right.

Sundown - I'll get the suitcases, allright? (He walks offstage).

Bokonon - You are leaving, then?

Field - No, but that's how we ended our last play and I suppose we're just falling into the habit.

Bokonon - Are you going to look for someone else to write for you?

Field - No.

Bokonon - That is good.

Field - I don't really intend to leave; I'll write us a play. How about, (Pause) "Blackbird Crossfire"?

The setting, an expressway underpass-overpass, the pass has already been made, and the last blasts of the atomic storm settles the country side. All that is left is all that is left. But, he, enters, Sundown, with two suitcases, (Sundown enters with two suitcases), decides to act out the final day of his life among the pigeons, mourning doves and

Bokonon - Grackles.

Sundown - What is going on?

Field - Starlings; any of the gray to black in color. He is no nature-lover. And yet, and this should be vivid, he abhors a vacumm as much as nature does and this particular spot seemed to be a void.

Sundown - I think I've missed something.

Field - The sun is high in the sky. It is a nice day. (She is still setting the scene). A nice day. Which sounds like a lot of boring nothingness. But, it occured to me that now I am sorry I tried to apologize, I should have ignored him.

Bokonon - Perhaps, my child.

Field - There was, after all, Sundown to think of.

Sundown - Does this have to do with the Trojan Horse? Or the dog?

Field - In that suitcase, Sundown, there is a pair of gloves, and we're going to need them. Radiation attacks the hands and we're the last survivors. Besides, this way we don't leave finger prints. So, we'll probably need them. (Pause). No interruptions, (She puts on the gloves) here we go:

? - If you could possess anything on earth, on this, your final day, what would it be?
! - Your soul; your innermost workings.
? - So, that is all you ever wanted from me?
! - No, there was a time when I wouldn't have cared if you had a soul. It was then that I wanted you to be flesh and bone and sinew.
? - And before that?
! - It would have to be your . . .
? - yes?
! - There was nothing before that.
? - That's what I suspected.
! - Although I liked the way your eyes lit up.
? - That is irrelevant. (Pause). All of this proves my point.
! - Point?
? - I should have ignored you, I never should have apologized.
! - You mean you were doing that while I was risking everything?
? - (She says nothing for a moment). I can't stand to be cruel.
! - I was risking everything; my name, my job, my wife and child, my reputation, my
? - (Interrupting) If you only hadn't taken your time about it. Besides, I said I was sorry.
! - So say it again, now.
? - (She says nothing).
! - (Shouting) You were doing that while I was risking everything. You were actually with him?
? - (She says nothing).
! - You're not human.

Field - (Taking off the leather gloves). It is done.

Bokonon- There is much sadness in you.

Field - Like a low, moaning wind, I would say.

Bokonon - It will be easier the next time.